

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

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S E C R E T LISBON 1583

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PO, US

SUBJECT: REPRESENTATION TO GOP

REFS: (A) STATE 18428; (B) STATE 23925; (C) STATE 55022;

(D) LISBON 1397

1. I HAVE PERHAPS BEEN AT FAULT IN NOT CONVEYING FULL FLAVOR OF ANTI-AMERICAN SENTIMENT STIRRED UP IN WAKE OF MARCH 11 EVENTS, STEMMING PARTICULARLY FROM GENERAL OTELO'S REMARKS. I HAVE BEEN HESITANT TO DO THIS SINCE MANY OF THE ATTACKS CENTER ON ME PERSONALLY, BUT HAVE NO DOUBT THAT THEIR PURPOSE IS TO WEAKEN OVERALL US INFLUENCE. THE FACT IS THAT WE HAVE BEEN SMEARED AND SMEARED EFFECTIVELY.

2. ONLY PUBLIC GOP RESPONSE TO OTELO'S STATEMENT WAS RATHER WEAK JESUINO ANSER TO PRESS INQUIRIES SAYING I WAS PERSONA GRATA AND GENERALLY EXCUSING OTELO'S COMMENTS. THE PRESS HAS TAKEN THIS AS A GREEN LIGHT TO PUBLISH INSINUATIONS OF USG INVOLVEMENT IN MARCH 11 COUP, AND TO CONTINUE TO ASSOCIATE ME WITH THE CIA. MUCH OF THIS NONSENSE IS BELIEVED BY THE POPULACE, AND THERE ARE EVEN THREATS OF PHYSICAL HARM TO EMBASSY EMPLOYEES. IT IS ALSO AFFECTING OUR CONTRACTS.

3. MY INITIAL IMPRESSION WAS THAT DEPARTMENT'S PROMPT ACTION IN CALLING IN PORTUGUESE AMBASSADOR AND MY TALKS WITH LOARES AND OTELO WERE SUFFICIENT REACTION.

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4. I HAVE NOW CONCLUDED THAT OTELO'S REMARKS HAD A MORE

PROFOUND IMPACT THAN ANTICIPATED, AND AN ADDITIONAL RESPONSE FROM USG IS CALLED FOR. THE ISSUE IS A DISAGREEABLE ONE FOR GOP SINCE NO ONE WANTS TO TAKE ON OTELO DIRECTLY; HENCE WE NEED TO BE MORE ENERGETIC IN ORDER TO GET THEIR ATTENTION. THEY CANNOT HELP BUT CONTRAST OUR STRONG DEMARCHE IN JANUARY OVER LEFTIST DRIFT TO PRESIDENT AND PRIME MINISTER WITH SEEMINGLY LESSER EXPRESSION OF CONCERN OVER OTELO'S STATEMENT. THIS PARTICULARLY TRUE SINCE OUR EARLIER DEMARCHES WERE BASED ON SPECULATION WHEREAS IN THIS CASE WE HAVE AN IRRESPONSIBLE AND PROVOCATIVE PUBLIC ACT BY A SENIOR AFM AND GOP OFFICIAL, AND THEY KNOW IT.

5. SINCE I DO NOT WANT TO PUT PRESSURE ON COSTA GOMES OR SOARES AT THIS JUNCTURE (BOTH ARE IN SHAKY POSITIONS) I HAVE ASKED FOR APPOINTMENT WITH VASCO GONCALVES. UNLESS INSTRUCTED TO CONTRARY, I INTEND TO TELL HIM PRIVATE ASSURANCES THAT OTELO WAS SPEAKING FOR HIMSELF (LISBON 1397) AND JESUINO'S PUBLIC COMMENTS ARE NOT SATISFACTORY REACTION TO OUR CONCERN. ALSO INTEND TELL HIM OTELO STATEMENT AND LICENSE IT HAS GIVEN TO IRRESPONSIBLE JOURNALISTS CANNOT HELP BUT DAMAGE USG-GOP RELATIONS.

6. SUCH TALK FROM ME WILL HAVE ONLY LIMITED EFFECT, HOWEVER, SINCE I AM THE PRINCIPAL ONE BEING SMEARED AND DOUBTS ABOUT ME MAY WELL EXIST NOW AT HIGH GOP LEVELS. IF DEPARTMENT SHARES MY CONCERN, SUGGEST I BE AUTHORIZED TO DELIVER PERSONAL MESSAGE TO PRIME MINISTER FROM SECRETARY. ALSO SUGGEST THEMIDO BE CALLED IN AGAIN AT APPROPRIATELY HIGHER LEVEL AND ASKED IF SOARES COMMENT TO ME WAS INTENDED TO BE RESPONSE TO OUR DEMARCHE TO HIM. IF SO, THAT RESPONSE IS INADEQUATE. FURTHER ACTION BY GOP IS CALLED FOR. SUCH ACTION NEED NOT BE EXPLICIT PUBLIC REBUKE OF OTELO, BUT AT VERY LEAST SOME INDICATION OF GOP AWARENESS USG NOT INVOLVED IN MARCH 11 EVENTS APPEARS APPROPRIATE.
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